

[“The Underground: A Response to Dostoevsky” to present theatre experience on mortality and the living dead \(with photos\)](#)

Italy's Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards will perform "The Underground: A Response to Dostoevsky" in November, presenting a deeply resonant theatre experience on mortality.

Nineteenth-century Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky, the originator of "Notes from the Underground" and a seminal figure in existentialism, foresaw that rationalism would wipe out the desire for freedom and ethical considerations while moral conventions would undermine the complexity of human nature. In "The Underground: A Response to Dostoevsky", the Workcenter interweaves the "Art as Vehicle" approach of vibratory songs with narration to resonate deeply with the audience, and poses a compelling question: Can we liberate ourselves from becoming members of the living dead?

In "Art as Vehicle", performing serves to tap an actor's inner potential and help find the road towards inner evolution, unsettling preconceived notions of the roles and relationships of spectator and performer.

Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski was founded in 1986 in Pontedera, Italy, where Grotowski developed the line of performance research known as "Art as Vehicle". Within this creative investigation, he worked very closely with Thomas Richards, whom he called his "essential collaborator". In 1996, he even changed the Workcenter's name to include that of Richards.

Jerzy Grotowski is considered one of the most influential theatre practitioners of the 20th century. As a young director he immersed himself in Constantin Stanislavski's pioneering investigations and often said that his own theatre work began where Stanislavski left off.

Thomas Richards started apprenticing under Jerzy Grotowski in 1985, and they worked together until Grotowski's passing in 1999. Since 2008, Thomas Richards has been leading a new team at the Workcenter, the Focused Research Team in Art as Vehicle. With his team he has directed and conducted works including "The Living Room" (premiered in 2009), "The Underground: A Response to Dostoevsky" (premiered in 2016) and "L'heure fugitive" (premiered in 2017). Since 2016, Richards has also been leading the newly founded Workcenter Studio in Residence.

"The Underground: A Response to Dostoevsky" is one of the highlights of the New Vision Arts Festival (NVAF). It will be staged at 8pm on November 16 and 17 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Studio Theatre. Tickets priced at \$220 and \$280 are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For credit card

telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the NVAF is celebrating its ninth edition this year and is being held from October 19 to November 18. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2370 1044 or visit www.newvisionfestival.gov.hk.

